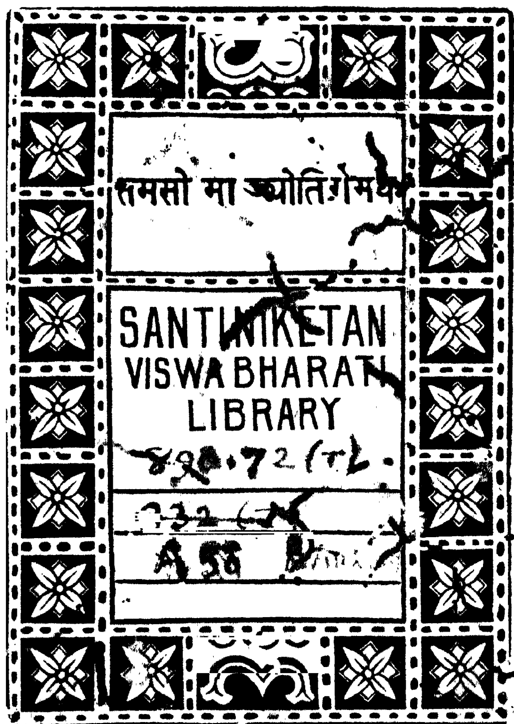

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# THE WALTZ OF THE DOGS

*A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS*

By

LEONID ANDREYEV

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ANATHEMA

THE LIFE OF MAN

THE SORROWS OF BELGIUM

# THE WALTZ OF THE DOGS

*A Play in Four Acts*

BY

LEONID ANDREYEV

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT BY
HERMAN BERNSTEIN

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# CHARACTERS

HENRY TILE
CARL TILE, *his brother*
ELIZABETH
ALEXANDROV, *nicknamed "Feklusha"*
"HAPPY JENNIE"
ANDREY TIZENHAUSEN
IVAN YERMOLAYEV
IVAN, *man servant*
TWO HOUSE PAINTERS

# THE WALTZ OF THE DOGS

## ACT I

SCENE: *Two house painters are singing a song behind the wall. They sing it softly, without words, monotonously.* CARL TILE, *a student, is sitting at his brother* HENRY TILE'S *writing table. The apartment is new, not yet completely finished or furnished; nor is the room in which* CARL TILE *is sitting completely finished. It is intended as a drawing room, and the new furniture is arranged in strict order: armchairs, plain chairs, a small round table near a couch, an oval mirror; but there are no rugs, no draperies, and no paintings. In the middle of the room a table is set for dinner. Everything in the room is angular, cold, lifeless—life had not yet begun there. The new little piano is very glossy; music is arranged on the music stand.* CARL TILE *is busying himself with a skeleton key.*

CARL

The house painters are singing.

*He whistles softly to the tune of the quiet song without words. Then he strikes the table with his palm softly and says:*

Yes.

*He strikes the table twice again after measured pauses, repeating:*

Yes—Yes.

*Pause.*

I have just opened my brother Henry's table with a skeleton key. I was looking for money. But I found only twenty-five rubles—only twenty-five rubles. That's too little.

*Again he strikes the table after measured pauses.*

Yes—Yes—Yes. I wonder whether my brother Henry—Henry Tile—knows that I am a card-sharp, a gambler, a thief, that I am looking for a woman to support me! No, he does not know. My brother Henry is not wise. No. No. Now he'll think the house painters stole the twenty-five rubles, he may not even notice that they are missing. "Brother Carl!" he says, "Brother Carl." Yes.—But could I?—If Henry had much money, oh, a lot of money, of course—and if it

could be done unnoticed, oh, of course, unnoticed —could I kill Henry, my brother Henry Tile?

*He rises and walks up and down the room twice. He is tall, straight, in a long student's coat, hanging clumsily and loosely upon him. His hair is brushed back smoothly, and is glossy. The dark blue collar of his coat is unusually high. Carl's face is dry, somewhat stern, with regular features, and very decorous. He sits down at the table again and taps it three times, saying:*

Yes—Yes—Yes. The house painters are singing. A sad tune. A quiet tune. I am a scamp, yet I am fond of sad songs, while my brother Henry has no taste at all. And his new apartment is dreadful. There is something here that inspires crime. The house painters are singing.

*He whistles softly to the accompaniment of the tune. He hears the sound of the door opening in the corridor, voices; and rising slowly, he walks up and down the room with measured steps as before. Enter* HENRY TILE, *and his associates,* DMITRY YERMOLAYEV, *a stumpy man of Russian type, and* ANDREY TIZENHAUSEN. *Behind them walks* ALEXANDROV, *smiling confusedly and happily. He*

*is nicknamed "Feklusha"—he had been a schoolmate of* HENRY TILE *in the first classes of the gymnasium.*

HENRY

Hello, Carl. How are you?

CARL

Hello, Henry. Thank you. And how are *you?*

HENRY

Thank you, I'm well. Gentlemen, are you all acquainted with my brother Carl? Carl, these are my associates at the bank—they are all gentlemen for whom I have a great deal of respect.

TIZENHAUSEN

How do you do, Mr. Tile?

YERMOLAYEV

Very pleased to make your acquaintance. You resemble your older brother very much, very, much.

HENRY

O, yes, we resemble each other a great deal. He is a fine fellow, a serious worker.

*To Carl:*

And this gentleman is known as Feklusha—are you acquainted? They call him Feklusha.

*Laughs.*

We used to go to school together—to the Peter school. He was expelled from the second class, and he has had hard luck all his life. Feklusha, you were expelled from the second class, weren't you?

*Laughs.*

FEKLUSHA

From the third, Mr. Tile. For lack of ability. My conduct was excellent.

HENRY

He says, for lack of ability!

*Laughs.*

I met him on the Nevsky yesterday. It was raining hard—Twenty years have passed since we parted, still I recognized him. And he was walking very fast. You were running, Feklusha, weren't you?

FEKLUSHA

It was raining, and I had no umbrella. I was running!

HENRY

I invited him to dinner to-day. But, gentlemen, I hope you will forgive me if the dinner is not as good as I should like you to have in my new

home. This is my first dinner at home, and I cannot guarantee that my new cook is an expert.

YERMOLAYEV

Mr. Tile, why should you excuse yourself? I only hope we are not inconveniencing you.

HENRY

Oh, no, I am glad.

TIZENHAUSEN

What excuses! On the contrary, I am highly flattered that you invited me to the first dinner at your own home. When you are married, and you will have everything in order, you will forget your old friend Andrey Tizenhausen.

HENRY

Everything will be in order, but I will never forget old friends. Sit still and smoke your cigar.

YERMOLAYEV

*To Carl:*

Didn't I see you last week at Donon's restaurant? You were sitting there with a lady and an officer—I believe he was an officer of the guards?

CARL

*Lying.*

No. I never go to Donon's.

HENRY

Carl can't afford such expensive restaurants.

YERMOLAYEV

Then I must be mistaken. Excuse me. But he looked exactly like you.

HENRY

You were mistaken, Dmitry.

*To Carl:*

Well, how are you getting on with your work? I like to hear about your achievements.

CARL

*Lying.*

I delivered the second installment yesterday.

HENRY

Oh, that's good. You are a serious worker. But, gentlemen, isn't this song annoying you? I hear it again. My house painters are singing there.

TIZENHAUSEN

It's without words. I didn't think they called that a song.

YERMOLAYEV

*Listening.*

But it's good! There is something of the stage-coach driver in it.

*To Henry:*

My father was a stage-coach driver.

HENRY

It sounds very good to me, too. Although my father was of Swedish descent, I feel that I am a Russian, and I understand *this*. This is Russian sadness.

TIZENHAUSEN

Although my name is Tizenhausen, I don't even know how to speak German. I am a Russian. Nevertheless—you will pardon me, Henry, I don't understand the meaning of this Russian sadness.

HENRY

Oh, one must feel it.

TIZENHAUSEN

Do you feel it?

HENRY

Not now. Oh, now I am so happy that I cannot feel any sadness—Russian, Swedish, or German!

*All laugh.*

TIZENHAUSEN

Manly words, Henry! But won't you show us your new apartment before it gets dark? I am

dying of curiosity, I want to see how you are building your nest. Look out, Henry, I am an old and experienced man!

HENRY

Oh, you can't frighten me, you old grumbler!

*Laughs.*

I am only a happy fiancé, but you will see what a definite plan I have. Oh, you'll see!

YERMOLAYEV

I'd be delighted to see.

HENRY

Please follow me. Carl, be so kind as to stay here with Feklusha while I show them my home. Feklusha, please smoke, the cigarettes are on the table.

*They go out.* FEKLUSHA, *confused, takes a cigarette.* CARL *lights a match and holds it out to him, while he examines him coldly.*

FEKLUSHA

*Bending over to the match,*

Thank you very much, I'll do it myself.

CARL

Please. Why do they call you by such an absurd name—"Feklusha"? It's a woman's name.

FEKLUSHA

How shall I tell you, Mr. Tile? I suppose it's on account of my character. I am always somewhat timid, inclined to tears, and in the same manner, too hasty—quick in my thoughts.

CARL

Why "in the same manner"?

FEKLUSHA

They say so.

CARL

No, they don't. But you are not very quick today. Where are you employed?

FEKLUSHA

How shall I tell you, Mr. Tile? I'm employed by the police.

CARL

What!

FEKLUSHA

No, no, I am working in the office of the chief of police, in the passport department. Mr. Henry Tile knows about it.

CARL

Are you getting much?

FEKLUSHA

Forty rubles—well, together with gratuities and extras, and so on, it comes to about ninety rubles. A very trivial sum.

CARL

A large family?

FEKLUSHA

Enormous!

CARL

Why don't you get into the detective service? It's more profitable, you could earn more.

FEKLUSHA

You're joking. How can I?

CARL

No. I am serious. You are hardly suited to be a *provocateur*, but as an ordinary detective you might do. It isn't as hard as it seems. How much does a good detective get?

FEKLUSHA

A trifle—they don't get much.

CARL

I mean a good detective?

FEKLUSHA

Oh, a really good detective gets enormous sums. But since you are talking to me in such a friendly spirit, I must confess to you, I have tried it, I have made all kinds of efforts—but—

CARL

But what?

FEKLUSHA

Nothing. I have no abilities of any kind, I am not fit for anything worth while. That's my misfortune. That's why I'm doomed—I have no abilities.

CARL

None?

FEKLUSHA

Not the slightest! You know, there are so many opportunities around me that if God had only given me some talent, I could have provided for my family perfectly. But without talents, I run about, and no matter how hard I try, I can't earn another kopek. How can I?

CARL

Feklusha, could you make or get—I don't know what you call it there—could you get me a false foreign passport?

FEKLUSHA

No. I couldn't! How could I?

CARL

But if you tried—for a substantial sum?

FEKLUSHA

What do you need it for?

CARL

One must always have a foreign passport for an emergency. No, I am only jesting, of course. Were you really running when my brother Henry met you?

FEKLUSHA

You are laughing at me, Mr. Tile? Pardon me, but I don't quite understand your conversation.

CARL

No, Feklusha, I am not laughing. Do I look like a man who is fond of laughing? Henry asked me to entertain you, and I am entertaining you. Does Henry intend to assist you?

FEKLUSHA

I would be extremely happy! He told me that he was giving financial aid to his brother—he meant you, Mr. Tile?

CARL

Yes. But I prefer to speak about you, Feklusha. Tell me, when you were a detective, did you often have dealings with murderers?

FEKLUSHA

With murderers?

*Henry and his friends return, talking. Henry is laughing.*

HENRY

You are surprised, you old grumbler? Let me brush off your coat, you have soiled your sleeve, Dmitry.

CARL

I'll bring the brush.

YERMOLAYEV

It isn't worth bothering, really, it isn't.

HENRY

He'll bring the brush. Carl, fetch it. Well, gentlemen, how do you like it?

*Laughs happily.*

YERMOLAYEV

It's a wonderful little apartment, Henry.

TIZENHAUSEN

Yes, I am astounded, Henry.

HENRY

In the dining room I will have oak-colored wall paper, eventually I will change it to oak veneer. The windows of the nursery, as I said before, will always have the sun. It will always be light there. That's hygienic, and essential in Petrograd. Unfortunately, I had too little sunshine during my own childhood, so I want my children to have plenty. Sunlight is essential.

TIZENHAUSEN

But, Henry, you talk as if you already had children, and a heap of them! That is the self-assurance of a bachelor!

HENRY

I *will* have them.

*Enter* CARL *with a brush.*

HENRY

Please, Dmitry, Carl will brush your sleeve. I *will* have them. I have already bought a children's cot—in a week from now it will be in its proper place waiting for its master.

*Laughs.*

YERMOLAYEV

And when is the wedding to take place?

HENRY

In a week from now the apartment will be ready. In seventeen days, counting from to-day, the wedding will take place. To-day, by the next mail, in about twenty minutes from now, just before dinner, I will get a letter from Elizabeth, in which she will inform me exactly on what day she arrives. Elizabeth went to Moscow to see her parents. Now this room, Andrey! Here, rugs. There, portières. In these vases, always fresh flowers.

TIZENHAUSEN

That's a luxury, Henry.

HENRY

Fresh flowers are not a luxury. And here, over the piano, I will have two gravures—meanwhile I haven't enough money for paintings—the head of Beethoven and Giorgoni's "Concert." Are you looking, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

I am staring!

HENRY

*Laughing.*

Staring! And here, Andrey, in this corner, will be an armchair in which I will sit quietly while Elizabeth plays Beethoven and Grieg. You see, I have already secured the music from which she will play for the first time, while I will be sitting in my armchair.

*Shakes the dust off the music and replaces it carefully and tenderly.*

How dusty!

TIZENHAUSEN

That's from the workmen, Henry.

HENRY

There will be no dust in my home. Have you a piano, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

Where would I get it, Henry?

HENRY

*Laughs.*

He says, where would he get it? Let me tell you, Andrey, this nook where I am going to sit and listen is my particular joy.

YERMOLAYEV

Have you a lease for this apartment?

HENRY

Yes. I have a lease for three years, with the privilege of renewing. I don't want to change apartments every three years. Yes, Andrey. My mind is dry and practical, I have no talent for music, but I am extremely fond of it, just as my brother Carl is.

CARL

But you play, Henry.

HENRY

What! Don't joke, Carl.

CARL

Have you forgotten? You played well in our nursery days.

TIZENHAUSEN

So that's the sort of man you are, Henry! At the bank we are under the impression that you are only a splendid financier, with a most remarkable head for figures, while now it appears that you are also a musician. Henry—a Mozart!

HENRY

*Laughs.*

Not quite so important. Yes, I recall. There's a little piece I used to play with two fingers, that

my mother taught me to play when I was a child. It is called by a strange name—"The Waltz of the Dogs."

CARL

Play it, Henry.

HENRY

*Threatening with his finger:*

Now, now, Carl!

TIZENHAUSEN

No, you must!

*To Yermolayev:*

Don't you think he ought to play it for us, or we'll be offended and leave.

YERMOLAYEV

So that's the kind of talents you have, Henry! I never suspected it, never! And at the bank we don't know anything about it. Play!

HENRY

*Laughs.*

Now, now. But I must admit that Elizabeth is very fond of my "Waltz of the Dogs," very!

*All laugh.*

CARL

Well, then, Henry?

HENRY

Carl, you are a jester.

*Mockingly:*

But since the audience demands it——

*Sits down by the piano, says with mock solemnity:*

I beg the audience to listen attentively. I will now play "The Waltz of the Dogs."

*He plays "The Waltz of the Dogs." During the playing he sits straight, serious, his face is immobile, almost petrified, but after finishing his play, he bursts into laughter. While* HENRY *is playing,* CARL *watches him coldly and closely, then he is the first to applaud. General applause, but as there are only few listeners, the sound is light.*

HENRY

*Bowing mockingly:*

Ladies and gentlemen, your humble servant! I cannot play an encore, but whoever wishes to hear this music again, is invited to come in seventeen days to the wedding ceremony of Henry Tile and the maiden Elizabeth Molchanova. Then I shall play it again.

*He laughs and closes the piano cover.*

FEKLUSHA

At what time will the wedding take place?

HENRY

At half past seven. And don't be late! But you will learn all this from the invitations which are already being printed.

TIZENHAUSEN

Are you happy, Henry?

HENRY

Yes, my friend! Let me clasp your hand, but silently, silently, Andrey. This way. And now, gentlemen, don't you feel that after my music your appetite has grown stronger? Aren't you hungry? Carl, please tell my new cook that in ten minutes we shall be ready to have her pass an examination.

CARL

I am going.

*Exit, soon returns.*

HENRY

Are you hungry, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

Yes. It wouldn't do any harm to eat.

HENRY

*Laughs.*

He says, it wouldn't do any harm! And the cognac? Will that do any harm?

FEKLUSHA

That surely wouldn't do any harm.

*All laugh.*

TIZENHAUSEN

I suppose you think that your schoolmate doesn't drink anything but sacred water? Then you are making a great mistake—he drinks cognac.

HENRY

*Laughs.*

He drinks cognac!

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

A pleasant occupation! There's no use in hiding the fact: in spite of my general lack of ability, *this* talent——

*Sighs.*

I *have.*

YERMOLAYEV

It's most remarkable, Henry. I have watched you for eight years, we have been in restaurants together, but I have never seen you drink too much!

HENRY

*Laughing.*

Really?

YERMOLAYEV

Never!

TIZENHAUSEN

And you never will, Dmitry! He has a strong head, such as this world has never seen before!

HENRY

Do you think so? Perhaps you are right. And what is more—Gentlemen, the bell! That's the postman, bringing a letter from Elizabeth. Carl, please.

*Exit* CARL. HENRY *is agitated, but restrained.*

HENRY

*To Feklusha:*

So you are fond of cognac?

CARL

*Entering.*

A letter from Moscow, registered. Sign here, Henry.

HENRY

*Signing.*

I always asked her to send it registered. Here are twenty kopeks for the postman. So. Now they are writing us from Moscow.

*Tearing the envelope open.*

You will pardon me, gentlemen?

TIZENHAUSEN

How can we prevent a lover from reading his letters? Go ahead, Henry, we are not here.

HENRY *reads slowly and long. He turns pale at the first lines, and keeps growing ever paler. No one but* CARL *is watching him.*

YERMOLAYEV

*Softly:*

A wonderful little apartment! It's very hard to find one like it nowadays.

FEKLUSHA

You can't even touch any apartments now—it's simply terrible.

TIZENHAUSEN

Have you a family?

FEKLUSHA

An enormous one!

CARL

*Loudly:*

Aren't you feeling well, Henry?

*All look with alarm at* HENRY. *He gets up, walks two steps, and without saying a word strikes*

*the table with a powerful blow of his fist. Bottles and glasses fall. All jump to their feet.*

CARL

Henry!

TIZENHAUSEN

Henry!

HENRY *strikes the table once more just as forcefully with his fist, without saying a word. He stands silently, surveying them all with red eyes, as if looking for some one to attack.*

YERMOLAYEV

Bring him some water!

HENRY

I need no water!

TIZENHAUSEN

Henry! My dear Henry! Has anything terrible happened?

HENRY

No, nothing terrible.

CARL

Henry, calm yourself.

HENRY

I am calm.

TIZENHAUSEN

No. Something terrible has happened. My dear Henry! We are here! We are all your friends, Henry!

HENRY

I must ask you to excuse me, but there will be no dinner to-day. Carl, tell the new cook that she may go home now.

*Exit* CARL, *returns soon.*

TIZENHAUSEN

Who cares about the dinner? You shouldn't worry about such trifles, Henry!

YERMOLAYEV

Who cares about the dinner?

HENRY

There will be no dinner here to-day.

*He suddenly strikes the table again.*

TIZENHAUSEN

*Almost crying.*

Oh, my God! What a misfortune, Henry!

HENRY

Yes? Here is a very strange letter, Andrey. Either there's something wrong in this letter, or

I can't read it. Read it, Andrey, and tell me. Perhaps I have grown blind

TIZENHAUSEN

*Reads.*

No, you haven't grown blind, my poor Henry.

*Reads.*

No, it's impossible!

HENRY

And does it say there, "I still love you"?

TIZENHAUSEN

Yes, yes, Henry.

HENRY

So. Then I am not blind. And does it say there "But because of the insistence of my parents I am going to be married."

TIZENHAUSEN

Henry! She is already married. She is already married!

HENRY

She is already married to a wealthy man. What is his name, Andrey?

TIZENHAUSEN

His name is not mentioned.

HENRY

Not mentioned. So. And how did she sign it?

TIZENHAUSEN

*Reading:*

"Your unworthy Elizabeth."

HENRY

Unworthy Elizabeth. Yes. Unworthy Elizabeth.

*Suddenly strikes the table forcefully.*

Unworthy Elizabeth!

TIZENHAUSEN

But my dear friend, my unfortunate friend.

CARL

Keep up your courage, Henry!

HENRY

I will not do it any more.

YERMOLAYEV

Henry, it isn't worth worrying about. Such things happen in life. You will find a better bride for yourself.

HENRY

I will not do it any more. But, Andrey, don't you find that it is written with precise exactness: "Un-

worthy Elizabeth." Who? "Unworthy Elizabeth." Who? Henry Tile. And who else? "Unworthy Elizabeth." Don't you feel like laughing, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

*Frightened.*

No, Henry.

HENRY

You must not laugh. I will not allow any laughter. But, Andrey, don't you think that the whole letter is written in very precise language?

TIZENHAUSEN

Excuse me, Henry, but in my opinion—the opinion of an honest man—this is a contemptible letter. Yes.

HENRY

And in my opinion it is simply a very precise letter. Henry Tile loves accuracy—all his life he never made a mistake in a single kopek, he never made a mistake in addition, he never made a mistake in a single cipher, and now they have written a precise letter to Henry Tile. And it is signed: "Unworthy Elizabeth." Gentlemen, I should like to remain here alone.

TIZENHAUSEN

But how can you stay here alone, my dear friend?

HENRY

Never mind. I'll stay here alone.

CARL

If you like, I'll stay with you.

HENRY

No, Carl. I don't need you. Good night. To-morrow we will meet at the bank. Carl I want to say a few words to you.

*Quietly:*

Here is some money, please take these people to a restaurant and treat them to a good dinner.

CARL

May I clasp your hand, Henry?

HENRY

It's hardly necessary, but, please. Press it firmly.

CARL

I am pressing it firmly.

HENRY

*Smiling:*

No, press harder still.

CARL

I am. What do you want?

*They strangely measure their strength. The others look on uneasily.*

HENRY

Are you pressing with all your strength? Press harder.

CARL

I can't press harder.

HENRY

And I?

*Presses Carl's hand.*

TIZENHAUSEN

Don't, Henry. Leave him!

CARL

Henry, stop!

HENRY

*Smiling.*

And I?

CARL

*Turning pale and shrinking,*

It hurts. Stop! You'll break my hand!

*Henry releases his brother's hand and laughs.*

HENRY

You are very strong, Carl.

CARL

I don't like such jokes!

HENRY

*Morosely:*

Excuse me, Carl. That was really wrong. Excuse me. Good night, gentlemen. The door shuts itself, so I will not come out with you. Carl, I ask you once more to forgive me.

*All go out irresolutely, one by one, with different expressions upon their faces, shaking* HENRY'S *hand.* HENRY *remains alone; walks up and down the room. He is tall, wears a dark coat, with round flaps, gray trousers, neatly creased—his usual costume. All new and strong, and his shoes are also strong and new. His face is regular, dark-complexioned, stern. His hair is short. He wears a small mustache. The house painters resume their song.* HENRY *stops and listens.*

HENRY

What's that again? Who is there? What's that?

*Listens; suddenly strikes the back of the armchair violently.*

Stop!

*The song is continued. It is sung softly, sadly, monotonously.* HENRY *walks over to the door and shouts.*

Eh, you! Stop! Quit your work! Go home!

*He walks up and down the room again, pauses, walks again, looking at the door impatiently.*

They call this "Russian sadness." What nonsense, "Russian sadness!" Is there also such a thing as Swedish sadness? Then I feel it too! Who? Henry Tile. Who? Unworthy Elizabeth? And who else? And again Henry Tile, Henry Tile—O my God!

*Sighs, whistling, as one who has a toothache. The two house painters, frightened, slip by quietly in the dark like two shadows.*

Wait! It isn't necessary to work any longer—it's dark already—you can't see anything. And tell your master that I don't need your work any more, anyway. Where are you going? This way, there's no one there. The door shuts itself.

*The house painters go out,* HENRY *roams about the room, going to unexpected nooks, taps on the wall, as though looking for some forgotten door. He gradually blends with the gathering darkness.*

There is no one there, and there is no one here. Alone. Oh, Elizabeth, Elizabeth! Alone! Now I can break everything, smash and throw to the ground!

*Throws something on the floor.*

I can destroy—and no one can stop me. I can destroy everything. Here is the piano.

*He strikes the piano forcefully, and it resounds.*

How it sounds! And if I strike it again?

*He strikes it again and it sounds again.*

How it sounds! When I banged the table, they were frightened and they cried: "Henry, Henry, Henry!" I suppose I must have struck it powerfully, for my hand hurts. They cried, "Henry!" then, but now nobody will cry. I can strike, break, destroy. Nobody will stop me—I am alone. And I can take the revolver from the table, put it against my head and fire. What then? Then I will lie on the floor until morning. Then some one will break the door—who?

*Pause.*

No! But she is already married. My God! My God! My God! She is already married—already! My God! I hadn't thought of this. What shall I do, what am I going to do all night

long—*all night.* She is already married—How am I going to pass the night? It is so early, darkness has just set in. What am I going to do all night long! Elizabeth! Liza!

*Pause.*

No.

*Pause.*

*Suddenly his figure stirs in the darkness and he walks quickly.*

But that is impossible! I have forgotten! I have taken the apartment for three years. That's impossible, that's stupid—I cannot. Three years! I am ashamed. I have made a nursery, but I am not so ashamed of that. And my apartment? My God! And I have placed music upon the piano. Music. I bought it. Yes. What was I thinking about? She would have played, and I would have been sitting quietly, listening. I would have kissed her hand. Perhaps it would have been just as dark as it is now. I would have taken her gentle hand and put it to my lips. How is it done? This way.

*Silence. In the darkness his soft voice is heard, full of longing:*

What a long night! What a dark night! Liza!

*Curtain*

## ACT II.

SCENE: *The same scene as in the first act, only the dinner table is missing. Nothing is changed there, although a year has gone by. It is evening and electric lights are burning.* CARL TILE *is sitting at the writing table, cross-examining* IVAN, *the man servant.*

CARL

And what time does my brother usually come home?

IVAN

He has his dinner at the restaurant and comes home about eight o'clock. He goes out again at nine or ten. I don't know when he comes back.

CARL

And when do you go home?

IVAN

At ten. Sometimes he sends me away earlier.

CARL

Did you serve in the army?

IVAN

Yes, sir. In the cavalry.

CARL

Ah! Fine! You look all right, Ivan, and you answer questions sensibly. Fine!

IVAN

Glad to serve you.

CARL

Fine! Well, does he go out every evening?

IVAN

No, twice a week. All the other evenings he stays home. Perhaps he goes out after ten, only I don't know about it.

CARL

Correct. Who visits him?

IVAN

No one.

CARL

Really?

IVAN

Only Mr. Alexandrov comes up very often.

CARL

Which Alexandrov? From the bank?

IVAN

*Smiling:*

No. They call him "Feklusha."

CARL

Ah! What do they do?

IVAN

I don't know.

CARL

You answer wonderfully. But what do you serve them?

IVAN

Cognac.

CARL

Much?

IVAN

Plenty. We have a large stock of it.

CARL

Indeed! I know this Mr. Alexandrov. Be careful, Ivan, that he doesn't steal a fur coat some day.

IVAN

*Smiling:*

I'm watching him.

CARL

You are a splendid fellow. Now, Ivan, tell me: I suppose you have a key of your own for the outside door?

IVAN

Yes, sir. I have two keys for the back door. One is an extra key in case I lose the other one.

CARL

Correct. Can't you give me one of the keys? I sometimes pass here after ten o'clock. I want to get a book, and there is no one to open the door.

IVAN

I doubt it.

CARL

Nonsense. I am not Mr. Alexandrov, who may steal a fur coat. Here you have five rubles.

IVAN

Thank you very much. But I still have my doubts about it.

CARL

Nonsense! Here are five rubles more.

IVAN

Here is the key. But in case anything happens?

CARL

Of course, I take everything upon myself. You are a splendid fellow! I like sensible people. Here are two rubles more. Wait. Who's ringing the bell?

IVAN

I suppose it is Mr. Alexandrov—it can't be any one else. Excuse me.

*Exit, returns shortly, followed by* FEKLUSHA. *Announces, smiling:*

Mr. Alexandrov.

FEKLUSHA

*Flatteringly*

Good evening, Mr. Tile.

CARL *walks up and down the room, without responding, as though not noticing Alexandrov at all.*

I suppose Henry will be here soon. It is almost eight o'clock.

CARL *walks silently, then stops in front of* FEKLUSHA *and looks at him fixedly.*

CARL

I am dreadfully sick of you, Mr. Feklusha! For more than six months I haven't come here once without seeing that simpleton's face of yours. Why do you snoop around here? You work for the police, while I am an honest man, a student —you are repulsive to me.

FEKLUSHA

What will you do about it, Mr. Tile?

CARL

I've offended him. "Mr. Tile!" Yes, I am Mr. Tile, and if you steal a fur coat some day, Mr. Feklusha—

FEKLUSHA

Upon my word, I'll complain to Henry. Why do you persecute me, why do you make my life miserable? I work for the police, but I am an honest man—I have a family.

CARL

He talks of honesty!

IVAN

I'm going to complain!

CARL

And I will tell him that you are lying. Whom will he believe, Mr. Feklusha? I'm bored. I didn't have enough sleep last night. Tell me some interesting lie.

IVAN

I am not a liar. Lie yourself.

CARL

Rude—rude into the bargain! It seems you have no abilities of any kind. That's terrible—to be a nonentity, a fool, to be unable to do anything, even to lie. And in addition to that, to have an enormous family, dirty children—to love them, and wipe their noses tenderly! Fool! And in addition to all that to be sensitive, to have a certain self-respect. Self-respect! And I suppose his wife beats him too—I can tell by his beard. Your wife beats you, Mr. Feklusha, doesn't she?

FEKLUSHA

I don't feel like answering you.

CARL

I suppose your wife is a very untidy woman. And you are not particularly clean yourself, Mr. Alexandrov. You are repulsive to me. Why aren't you just an insect? Then you could be easily removed—with insect powder. We wouldn't have to stand upon ceremony with you. How absurd!

*He walks silently, then stops again in front of* FEKLUSHA, *very close to him.*

Are you angry? Don't be angry. Believe me, I was only jesting. Don't you want to look at me at all? Well, let me see your little eyes. I

slept very poorly last night, I spent the night with a woman, and I am nervous; do you understand, Feklusha, I am nervous! Under such circumstances a man will talk all sorts of nonsense.

FEKLUSHA

I'm not angry, but why should you offend a man like that? I haven't done you any harm. It's a sin, Mr. Tile.

CARL

It isn't right, I have already admitted it. Tell me, my dear fellow, what have you been doing here with my brother Henry?

FEKLUSHA

Nothing. Upon my word of honor!

CARL

Since you give me your word of honor, I bow to you and am silent. But what does he do? Every man does something—what does my brother Henry do?

FEKLUSHA

I don't know. Upon my word of honor!

CARL

Henry stays home, he has given up his sprees, and spends his evenings with a strange character

like you. Don't you think Henry has gone out of his mind—not altogether, but a little?

FEKLUSHA

Oh, no—I don't think so at all. You and I may go out of our minds, but not he!

CARL

It is very interesting to talk with you. You have such fascinating little eyes, Mr. Feklusha, and if you are not a downright scoundrel, then I know nothing about scoundrels.

FEKLUSHA

Again?

CARL

Let us combine, Mr. Feklusha. Do you want to make twenty thousand rubles? You can't imagine it? Well, then, here is the proposition: Persuade my brother Henry to insure his life for a hundred thousand rubles.

FEKLUSHA

I don't understand you. I can't tell when you are jesting and when you are not.

CARL

It's as plain as day. Altogether one hundred thousand rubles. Twenty thousand for you, and

eighty thousand for me, as his brother, and for the idea.

FEKLUSHA

But, for that, he would have to die!

*Carl laughs.*

CARL

You are comical.

FEKLUSHA

But what is he going to die from? What an idea! Henry is a strong man.

CARL

*Laughs loudly.*

You are very comical, Mr. Feklusha! You ought to be in a circus. You are a clown!

FEKLUSHA

*Rising.*

I am going to complain to Henry! What do you mean? Why do you annoy me like Satan? Satan!

CARL

*Indifferently:*

You are a perfect fool! And there is such an odor about you—I suppose you don't know what a bath is. Fie! Go and take a bath. I'll give you some money for a bath.

FEKLUSHA

I'll tell him everything, you'll see!

CARL

*Still more indifferently:*

Hold your tongue! I am disgusted with you. I want to walk and think. Keep quiet—and don't disturb me: If you breathe a word about it I will tell my brother Henry this evening that you were urging me to insure his life and kill him. Silence!

*He walks up and down the room slowly.* FEKLUSHA *is silent. A knock on the door in the corridor. After a few seconds* HENRY *enters.*

HENRY

Good evening, Carl. How are you? Good evening, Feklusha. Sit down.

CARL

Thank you, and how are you, Henry?

HENRY

Quite well. Have you been here long?

CARL

A little while.

HENRY

Did you come for money, Carl? I believe your month is not up yet.

CARL

Thank you. I still have enough. Besides, I have found a good pupil.

HENRY

Don't stand upon ceremony with me, Carl. I intend to increase your allowance twenty rubles a month. Feklusha, at yesterday's conference they decided to increase my salary by twelve hundred a year.

FEKLUSHA

Really? I congratulate you, I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart.

HENRY

The management appreciates my services.

CARL

I don't even congratulate you, Henry—it is so natural. Yesterday I met Tizenhausen, and he told me that you have become ideal. He assured me that he had never seen such a correct, tireless, and perfect worker as you are. Everybody fears you at the bank.

HENRY

Oh, yes, they are all afraid of me. When I pass by, they don't dare lift their heads from their work. Yesterday I dismissed two clerks for not being punctual. Yes, people have reason to be afraid of me.

CARL

Of course, you don't include me among them? I am jesting, Henry. But here is something I wanted to ask you seriously—I was talking about it with your friend here.

HENRY

With my client, Carl. The Romans used to say so.

CARL

I beg your pardon, with your client. I find that his condition is terrible. He has an enormous family, lack of means, lack of abilities.

HENRY

Well?

CARL

I don't need any more money. Be generous, Henry, give him the increase of twenty rubles a month. I ask you seriously.

*Pause.* HENRY *looks at his brother attentively.* CARL *is serious and modest.*

HENRY

Good, Good! Feklusha, did you hear what he said? Thanks to my brother, Carl, now you will get twenty rubles a month from me.

FEKLUSHA

*Confused.*

I really don't know—My God! Thank you, Mr. Tile. I can't express my—but in the name of my whole family—!

*On the point of tears. The brothers look at him.*

CARL

*To his brother, softly:*

He is agitated.

*Loudly:*

Well, good night, Henry, good night. Are you staying home this evening?

HENRY

No, I have an appointment. Good night, Carl. The door shuts itself.

*Exit* CARL. HENRY *waits until the door closes. Mockingly shows with his face and hand how the door closed, and laughs loudly.* FEK-

LUSHA *looks at him with a certain sense of fear.*

FEKLUSHA

Henry, you were drinking this evening at dinner?

HENRY

I always drink at dinner. If Carl were not my brother, I would have said that Carl was a—fool. (*Laughs.*) They gave me an increase of twelve hundred! They say I am ideal. Feklusha, they are afraid of me at the bank!

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs flatteringly.*

Very clever, Henry! I am amazed how you do it. Was it true that you dismissed two clerks?

HENRY

Yes.

FEKLUSHA

After all, I am sorry for them. Have they families?

HENRY

Whatever the situation, I cannot permit inaccuracies. They deserved to be dismissed.

FEKLUSHA

And what about the twenty rubles for me? Is that true, or were you only jesting?

HENRY

You are a rabbit—simply a cowardly rabbit. No, I was not jesting. You will get twenty rubles a month—but not long, not long, Feklusha! (*Laughs.*) These foolish people at the bank are afraid of me. I want to steal a million from them, and they are afraid of me! I want to steal a million from them, and they say, "Henry Tile is an irreproachable worker, he is ideal." Isn't it comical, Alexandrov?

FEKLUSHA

*Sternly:*

I don't believe it, Henry. These are only words to test me, nothing else. Excuse me.

HENRY

You believe I am so honest?

FEKLUSHA

I don't believe anything. I admit that with all your talent you could easily appropriate from the bank not only one million, but two millions—as many as you want. But—!

HENRY

Steal, Feklusha! Speak as a friend—steal!

FEKLUSHA

Still worse—steal! But what's the sense of it? What's the sense, Henry? I ask you with tears in my eyes, explain it to me, don't torture my head, don't torment me! Here they have given you an increase of twelve hundred and they will soon give you another increase—Henry, you are my benefactor, but I am absolutely convinced that you are just making sport of me.

HENRY

You are foolish, Feklusha.

FEKLUSHA

I have heard that many times. You can't surprise me with that, nevertheless I don't believe in your plan. My God! And why do you talk to me about it? What sort of comrade am I to you? You have the mind of a cabinet minister, and what am I? No. I am absolutely sure you are jesting, you are just acting, as in a play. You are not going to run away anywhere!

HENRY

You are a fool, Feklusha! You are all fools, and none of you knows Henry Tile with his great soul. I have a great soul! My soul dwells in a palace, and not in this stupid apartment, where the nur-

sery windows face the sun! But let them be deceived—I am gladdened by the sight of the deluded fools.

FEKLUSHA

I don't want to know about it, I don't want to! Do you hear, Mr. Tile, or no? I don't want to hear any more about it. For the past six months, ever since you told me about it, I haven't slept a single night—upon my word!

HENRY

Why should you sleep?

FEKLUSHA

What do you mean? I once lived without care.

HENRY

Why should you sleep? I do not sleep nights either. Oh, I have slept long enough, and now I have awakened. Don't you see the sun that is shining for me at night? That is my sun, I have awakened. Henry Tile, who is fond of punctuality, who placed this stupid music upon the piano, who leased the apartment for three years, for ten years, for a hundred years—Henry Tile has awakened! Would you like me to play for you "The Waltz of the Dogs"? Listen. I'll play for you "The Waltz of the Dogs."

*He plays it in the same serious, wooden, affected manner as before. Then he laughs.*

HENRY

Did you hear it?

FEKLUSHA

I did. You were drinking at dinner this evening.

HENRY

I always drink at dinner, I told you that before. But I see that you too need a drink to brighten up your dull brain.

*Rings.*

We'll have a *little cognac* now.

FEKLUSHA

*Laughing, pathetically:*

Now I believe you again. How you say it, a little cognac.

HENRY

Not so loud.

*Enter Ivan.*

Ivan, give us some cognac—or—that would be fine—let us have some Swedish punch. Quick!

*Exit Ivan.*

Do you like Swedish punch?

FEKLUSHA

I adore Swedish punch, but what's the use? I don't see the use of it.

HENRY

The use of it is that you drink cognac and punch, while Henry Tile is deceiving the fools with his arithmetic. And the use of it is also—and I want you to take note of it—that in about two weeks from now I am going away with a million rubles. I will not tell you the exact day.

FEKLUSHA

Why should I know the exact day? But how will you go, if you haven't even a foreign passport?

HENRY

I have it. But listen: Yesterday I was again examining the railway map and I discovered that my original plan of escape by way of Stockholm will not do. I'd be caught in Stockholm or in Malme. I am a severe critic. I see everything in advance. I have another plan now.

FEKLUSHA

What is it?

HENRY

I am not going to tell you.

FEKLUSHA

I wouldn't remember it, anyway. How many plans you have already told me! I forget them as soon as you tell them to me. What a head I have! Are we going to examine the map this evening? I like it—it's so interesting, it takes my breath away.

HENRY

No. Not so loud. Ivan is coming.

*Enter Ivan, with punch, which he puts on the table.*

Ivan, you may go home now, I'll not need you this evening. Good night, Ivan.

IVAN

Good night.

*Exit.*

HENRY

Drink, Feklusha, brighten up your dull brain. It's excellent punch!

FEKLUSHA

If I could only brighten it up! To-day my little boy took sick—the measles, I don't know—I went away from home—there is nothing for me to do there. A fine father, indeed!

HENRY

This evening we will go to that dirty little tavern of yours. I want to drink much this evening, to talk and see many people. But not fools! Feklusha, do you know that Elizabeth came to me twice and knocked at this door?

FEKLUSHA

No. Really? She was here herself?

HENRY

Yes. The first time she was sent away by Ivan, and the second time I myself opened this door for her, I raised my hand this way and said to her, "Go!" She said, "Forgive me." I said to her, "Go, foolish Elizabeth!" and I closed the door.

FEKLUSHA

*Drinks and laughs.*

I pity the women, they are foolish. But you loved her?

HENRY

No! And we are going this evening to that little tavern of yours—I like the people in that tavern!

FEKLUSHA

Very well, then, let us go. I am ready for anything.

HENRY

And I like you, too. With you I can talk as if I were alone. And yet I am *not* alone, because you have ears. But I *am* alone because these are the ears of a donkey! But you are sly—you are a very sly little animal.

FEKLUSHA

How am I sly? What are you saying? I was dreaming of becoming a detective—why, anybody would escape from under my very nose, and I wouldn't even notice it! Eh?

*Drinks.*

HENRY

No. You are a very, very sly little rabbit. I can see it. You have thought up something for yourself, you don't want to be a fool. Oh, you are a great scoundrel! But that doesn't matter, for I have already been forewarned by my angel!

*Laughs.*

That doesn't matter!

FEKLUSHA

Stop this. Is it possible that you know all the trains and all the steamers?

HENRY

All.

FEKLUSHA

Just think of it! All? And I can't even find the right street car, I always get into the wrong one. And is it possible that you need only two sheets of paper in order to get that million? It's hardly credible!

HENRY

Only two.

FEKLUSHA

What a talent! And what kind of papers do you need?

HENRY

You don't have to know that, you foolish Feklusha. That's superfluous. But in about two weeks a certain very correct gentleman will be traveling on a certain steamer and he will have a million in his pocket. And traveling on a certain steamer that gentleman will raise his hand this way—he will stretch it towards the distant shores and say, Good-by, distant and foolish shores! Good-by, apartment with a nursery facing the sun! And good-by and be cursed, and dead, and buried, Henry Tile, who loved order! Feklusha, would you like me to clasp your hand so that your bones will break?

FEKLUSHA

No. I don't like such jokes, Henry.

HENRY

Mr. Tile, and not Henry! If I see you again in any way disrespectful to me, Feklusha, my old comrade, the only friend of Henry Tile, I will not only break your hand, but I will break every bone in your body. Do you hear?

FEKLUSHA

It was unintentional. How could I allow myself to be disrespectful to you? My God, don't I understand the difference?

HENRY

Well said! Empty your glass and let us go at once to your little tavern. There you will keep quiet and drink until your eyes turn green, and I will drink, laugh, bang the table, and talk about the foolish, dead Henry Tile. Come!

FEKLUSHA

*Rising.*

I was going to ask you something, since you are so kind. Of course, I am a married man, but why shouldn't we go to a certain house on the way from the tavern? The women there are ex-

cellent, they are even intelligent. Really! It would be nice for you, too.

HENRY

Foolish and vulgar. You are a dreadfully petty scamp, you are a rabbit. Come

FEKLUSHA

*Emptying his glass.*

Right away. Well, then, we won't. I am not a scamp at all. I am simply an unfortunate man. If my child is ill—I am coming.

HENRY

Turn out the light.

*They turn out the light and go out. For some time the stage is empty. Then the door from the other rooms opens slowly, a careful whisper is heard, and two shadows, dimly lighted by the lantern in the street, move in the room. The restrained laugh of a woman is heard.*

CARL

*Loudly and firmly:*

There's no one here. They went away. You may come in. Don't be afraid.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Oh, I hurt my knee.

*Laughs.*

We are here like thieves.

CARL

I can't find the switch.. I think it is here. Wait, Liza, don't go before I turn on the light.

ELIZABETH

No, don't turn on the light, wait. I am sitting in an armchair. But I don't realize where I am. It is terribly interesting. We are like thieves in a strange apartment. They also sit in armchairs and look around this way. Let us make believe we are thieves, Carl.

*Jestingly, in a threatening whisper:*

Let us kill and rob your brother Henry Tile.

CARL

I haven't the slightest desire to play. But it was stupid of me not to take along the flashlight. Where are you? I can't see you.

ELIZABETH

Here.

CARL

I can't see anything, Liza. I am falling asleep. Another night like this and another day like to-day, and I'll fall asleep while walking. Strange! Aren't you tired?

ELIZABETH

*Laughing softly:*

No.

CARL

And I—

*Yawns.*

Do you ever let your husband sleep?

ELIZABETH

My husband—yes. But how interesting it is that we can't see anything. I don't know where you are sitting. What room is this? I am afraid to look at it in the light. I was in this apartment only twice. It wasn't finished yet, but Henry showed me how it would be finished. Tell me—no, don't turn on the light, but tell me—here, over the piano, are two pictures. Wait, I recall, yes, the head of Beethoven and some "concert"—yes?

CARL

No. There are no pictures here.

ELIZABETH

And the rugs?

CARL

There are no rugs here.

ELIZABETH

And the armchair in the corner?

CARL

I don't know. I am telling you Henry left the apartment unfinished. I am tired of this, Liza. Why did you drag me here? What do you want here?

ELIZABETH

I want it.

CARL

If this isn't your usual foolishness, it is a perverted whim. It's immaterial to me, but this is simply uninteresting. And if it is part of your program this evening to shed tears about the broken home, then pardon me—I'll fall asleep.

ELIZABETH

I don't remember Henry's face. Does he resemble you? I can't recall his face.

CARL

Good night. I am falling asleep.

ELIZABETH

You are dreadfully abominable. I am surprised that such an honest and honorable man as Henry should have such a dishonest brother.

CARL

And therefore, leaving the honest Henry, you became the mistress of the dishonest Carl? Correct!

ELIZABETH

According to you, I am also——

CARL

Also what? First you betrayed Henry with your husband, now you are betraying both Henry and your husband with me. Well, your husband, of course, is a fool, but after all—and then, you are supporting me. You know, that is not particularly moral.

ELIZABETH

Turn on the light.

CARL

Gladly.

*Looking for the switch.*

Lizette, I don't understand why you are so disgusted with me. You have just said so tragically, "Abominable." There!

*Turns on the light.* ELIZABETH *is sitting in the armchair near the piano; she covers her eyes with both hands as the light is suddenly turned on.* CARL *sits down again, tired, blinking at the light.*

I am convenient, because you may say everything and do everything with me. The devil take them! They have been drinking punch here. That makes the picture lively. Mr. Feklusha is managing his affairs quite nicely. Punch!

ELIZABETH *takes her hands away from her eyes and examines the room with fear. She wears large diamond earrings. She is beautiful.*

ELIZABETH

This is terrible! This is terrible!

CARL

It is simply tasteless.

ELIZABETH

No! It looks as if a crime had been committed here. A crime *was* committed here. I am a murderess, Carl!

CARL

Nonsense! A woman's nerves! But something is here—a certain interesting odor. Crime!

There's a word that should be pronounced cautiously. It has a magic effect. Ah, the devil take it. And the door. He has a key, he may come back any moment. Let us go!

ELIZABETH

Wait. I am looking. I love him!

CARL

I have no doubt. What wonderful diamonds you have, Liza!

ELIZABETH

I love him. Why have I done it? It wasn't necessary, it wasn't necessary at all. I have an enormous amount of money, but I don't need it, I don't need it at all. But at that time I wanted money—or didn't I want it? I don't know. I don't know! Carl, I'll give you ten thousand to-morrow, if you like.

CARL

I do.

ELIZABETH

I'll give you twenty thousand, if you like.

CARL

No, you won't, my dear. You won't give me even ten thousand, but you will give me five hundred

for this visit. I know you, my dear! But I am not complaining. I am satisfied.

*Walks uneasily.*

Liza, my nerves are on edge.

*Stretching himself.*

We must do something. Let us go driving like mad in an automobile. Come. Meanwhile, let me kiss your ear—you have such wonderful ears.

ELIZABETH

Ears or—earrings?

CARL

Both. You are such a darling.

ELIZABETH

Leave me alone. Don't dare!

CARL

I dare. And now this one!

*Kisses her ear.*

ELIZABETH

*Mockingly:*

Karlusha!

CARL

*Quickly stepping away, angrily:*

Please!

ELIZABETH

Karlusha! Karlusha!

CARL

*Turning pale:*

I have already asked you never to call me by that foolish name. My name is Carl and not Karlusha. Please remember!

ELIZABETH

*Also turning pale, but continuing to laugh.*

Karlusha! No! You are just Karlusha!

CARL

*Violently:*

But I ask you—seriously! You may call me whatever you like, I will not be offended, but I can't bear this nickname. Do you hear? Don't irritate me. Don't irritate me!

ELIZABETH

And what will happen if I do—Karlusha?

CARL

*Slowly:*

What will happen? My brother Henry will be tried for the murder of Elizabeth. I will choke you. Silence!

ELIZABETH

*Retreating, in a whisper:*

Karlusha, Karlusha; Karlusha!

CARL

*Advancing a step, also in a low voice:*

Keep quiet. Will you? For the last time——

ELIZABETH

*Hiding behind the armchair:*

Karlusha!

CARL *advances towards her silently.* ELIZABETH *retreats, without turning her widened eyes from him. Suddenly she stops and listens.*

Hush!

*Frightened.*

Some one is coming.

CARL

*Also frightened.*

Where? Ssh!

ELIZABETH

Footsteps.

CARL

No.

ELIZABETH

Some one is behind that door.

CARL

Tss. Where?

*Both are pale, bending, listening attentively. Pause. The electric light is burning.*

*Curtain*

## ACT III

SCENE I: *Night. Fog. The bank of one of the Petrograd canals. Lanterns are seen in the distance. A cast iron gate is seen distinctly in the foreground. Beyond it, the canal and the other side are enveloped in darkness, and enormous houses are outlined faintly in the background. Lights are seen in some of the windows here and there—the lights are faint and motionless like yellow spots.*

HENRY TILE *and* FEKLUSHA *are standing and talking, half leaning against the gate. Henry is smoking a cigar.*

HENRY

You are drunk, Feklusha, you are absolutely drunk. Your eyes are green. Come.

FEKLUSHA

I won't.

HENRY

Shall I call a cab? Then you won't have to drag your feet.

FEKLUSHA

I don't want to.

HENRY

I'll give you some more cognac.

FEKLUSHA

I don't want any. You're drunk yourself. I don't want to go to your apartment—leave me alone. I don't want to!

HENRY

Don't yell.

FEKLUSHA

I'm not yelling.

*Pause.*

Let me go, Henry. I will go down on my knees before you, if you like. I will go down on my knees before you, but let me go, or I will shout again.

HENRY

Alexandrov!

FEKLUSHA

I won't. Why did you take me along?

*Cries.*

I was hiding, but you found me—I can't bear it any more. I don't want to go to that tavern any

more. I don't want your cognac, I want to go home—my wife is waiting for me.

HENRY

You are drunk. Don't cry, it's foolish. Listen, have you forgotten what you wanted to do? Try to recall! Recall! You were planning to betray me when I run away with the money—in order to get one third. That would make you rich—rich! Recall!

FEKLUSHA

Well, I wanted to do it, but now I don't want to do it. I was driven insane by your maps; I began to feel like a bloodhound. I was running and running, without knowing where I was running. The day I met you on the Nevsky was cursed—I felt happy—I had found an old friend!

HENRY

Yes, that day was cursed. You express yourself precisely. Come to my house, come; it will be very nice there. Have you forgotten? We will light all the lamps, I will get some cognac.

FEKLUSHA

I won't go. That's my last word, Mr. Tile.

HENRY

Call me Henry.

FEKLUSHA

I don't want to. Either you run away with your million or—to the devil with it all! To the devil!

HENRY

Very well, I'll run away. Have another drink, it's cognac.

FEKLUSHA

Where did you get it?

*Drinks from the bottle.*

Very good. And you?

HENRY

I'll have a drink, too.

*Drinks.*

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

Fine comrades! The people of your bank should see you now—how funny! By God!

HENRY

*Laughs softly.*

They are sleeping, and they see in their dreams that Henry Tile is busy with his arithmetic. While Henry Tile is drinking cognac with Feklusha.

*Both laugh, swaying.*

FEKLUSHA

Where are we? I don't know this place. Where are we, Henry?

HENRY

This is the Catherine Canal. And that is the fog—and there is the water. Do you want to spit into the water?

FEKLUSHA

I do.

*Spits.*

And what is that?

HENRY

Those are the lighted windows of the houses on the other side. Someone is awake.

FEKLUSHA

And I thought only we were awake. Haven't you any more cognac? I would drink some more. I feel cold.

HENRY

Come to my apartment, and I'll give you more. There is a little round table, and on the table are cognac and punch. Are you fond of punch?

FEKLUSHA

*Still obstinate, but weakening,*

I won't go. Either you run away right now, or—! Why don't you run away? What sort of a thief are you? Upon my word of honor! I'll throw myself into the canal, by God, I will!

HENRY

Oh, what a sly little beast you are! You are all very sly beasts, and you want to be slier than Henry Tile; but you cannot. He will deceive you, Feklusha! I was jesting. You may run after me night and day, but you will not overtake me. You will lose your reason altogether, your eyes will turn yellow, you will be howling at the door, but you will not overtake me!

FEKLUSHA

My eyes are yellow now. And you are also drunk.

HENRY

You are foolish! I cannot be drunk. I drink this—(*Throws the bottle into the water*)—and it turns into fire, it burns like a flame. I am full of fire!

FEKLUSHA

I would have run away twenty times.

HENRY

Oh, yes. You would have run away twenty times. Another fool would have run away twenty times

—and twenty times the police would have caught another fool! But I am waiting. I am thinking and waiting. Oh, I have grown tired of making plans and upsetting them, but soon I am going to have a plan which cannot be upset—and then I shall disappear. One, two, three—Uf!

*Blows at his fingers:*

Where is Henry Tile? Disappeared. Excuse me, he has put on a magic cap. Feklusha! Could you overtake a phantom?

FEKLUSHA

*Laughing plaintively:*

Now it seems to me that I believe you again. You are a real tempter—a demon. I had better go home.

HENRY

Believe me, please, believe me! I have a remarkable mind which sees everything. You say this is the fog, and I am telling you that these are the wings on which Henry Tile will fly away. I have a remarkable mind; it thinks while others sleep. What is it thinking about? Everything! Oh, what dreams I see, what a happy man I am!

*Laughs happily.*

Excuse me, I pushed you.

FEKLUSHA

Never mind, Henry, that's nothing.

HENRY

That's impolite. Excuse me. Fools ask me, What do you do all day long, you are always alone? Why, I haven't enough days and nights for thinking! Thinking! Thinking! They take me to see gay women, they take me as if I were sick and needed a cure, and they ask me, Isn't it fine, Henry Tile? And I say to them, Very good! What a wonderful orgy!

*Laughs.*

FEKLUSHA

*Also laughing:*

Are the women nice?

HENRY

You are foolish. As if I needed women! For a trifling sum I can be immoral—how foolish! Listen, I am now thirty-four years old, and I may live another thirty-four years—and what if I should be old, that doesn't matter. The Popes of Rome are made Popes only when they are old—that doesn't matter. And in America—or wherever I shall be, wherever there will be the man who will emerge from the stupid skin of

Henry Tile—in America I will invest my million. Oh, I know how to handle money! I have a plan, I have given much thought to it, I have considered everything, and I know a dozen combinations which will bring me a hundred millions in five years. Is that good—a hundred millions?

FEKLUSHA

What a question!

HENRY

No, Feklusha, that isn't so good—but a thousand millions, but two thousand millions—that is good! Then I could live! Then I could amuse myself! On that I could have palaces, buy women, be the benefactor of idiots, have a Henry Tile of my own who would love accuracy—then I could amuse myself! I will amuse myself!

FEKLUSHA

No, I don't want to. Leave me, Henry. My dear fellow! Why did you take me by the hand? Leave me.

HENRY

You must believe me, my old friend! You must love me. I have a remarkable mind.

FEKLUSHA

I do love you, I do love you!

HENRY

*Bending down towards him, softly:*

Silence! Do you know that I, Henry Tile, am a criminal? I *am!*

FEKLUSHA

Really? At last, thank God!

HENRY

You can think of money only? No, it isn't *money.* It is women—it is little children who are still lisping, "Henry, Henry!" It is the murder of human beings, it is deception, it is betrayal, mockery, falsehood, cruelty—and what else is there? What else is there that Henry Tile has not yet tried?

FEKLUSHA

*Faintly:*

Leave me.

HENRY

We are going to have cognac soon—you like cognac? Or punch? My dear Alexandrov, I will give you punch, yes, as much as you like.

FEKLUSHA

Again punch? I don't want any.

*Rudely:*

When did you manage all this? You are lying, you haven't enough money for all that. I don't want to hear any more of this nonsense, that's enough!

HENRY

*Laughing happily:*

I am preparing myself, I must know everything. You remember how they taught us at school? I am preparing myself. I am painting pictures, I am a famous painter. I have achieved everything!

FEKLUSHA

Leave me alone.

HENRY

Be silent, or I will throw you into the water! I have achieved everything. They—these people—they know only the body of crime, but I, Henry Tile, I have penetrated into its soul. Oh, how I know the soul of murder!

FEKLUSHA

I'll call a policeman.

HENRY

Keep quiet, you fool!

FEKLUSHA

*Loudly:*

Po——

*Henry closes his mouth. A light struggle, followed by a pause. Only the frightened outcry of Feklusha and the heavy breathing of Henry are heard.*

HENRY

But I was only jesting. This is so foolish. I was jesting, don't you understand? You will not cry now, will you?

FEKLUSHA

No. I was scared.

HENRY

Of course, of course! You thought I was talking seriously, and you were frightened. Don't shiver like that, don't shiver. You are a poor little rabbit, while I am a wolf, isn't that so?

*Laughs, trying to appear kind.*

I am a wolf, am I not?

FEKLUSHA

I like you very much, Henry—you are my benefactor. Why should I cry?

*Sobs.*

Leave me, I am chilled, I may catch a bad cold.

HENRY

Yes, yes, it is very damp and foggy, you may catch cold, my dear fellow. Your health is very poor. You mustn't shiver. Don't—we will go soon. Shall we go or will you wait a little? I'll wait.

FEKLUSHA

I am going in a little while.

HENRY

Oh, what a foolish little beast! He is shivering But we will warm him up with hot punch, with very hot punch, and we will have some music. Do you like music, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

I do. Some one is coming. Let my hand go.

HENRY

*Laughing:*

That is the King of the Forest, Feklusha. "The child, all shivering, is clinging to its father." Who's coming? Who wants to scare my little rabbit?

*Laughs.*

That's nothing: It's a lady in a large hat. It's a beautiful woman for a song, and you will be a Don Juan to-night!

FEKLUSHA

No.

HENRY

Yes, yes. You said so yourself. Well, smile, smile—you are a splendid fellow!

*A woman with a large hat and bent wet plumes emerges silently from the fog.*

HENRY

Good evening, beautiful lady. May I know why you are walking alone in such bad weather?

*The woman looks at them silently.*

HENRY

*Laughing:*

Don't be silent, Feklusha, you must be a gallant cavalier. Ask her. You are a Don Juan this evening.

FEKLUSHA

What shall I ask her? Aren't you afraid to walk alone, mademoiselle?

HENRY

*Laughing:*

He says, aren't you afraid to walk alone? Well? Now let us hear the beautiful lady's answer. Well?

*The woman is laughing and waving her hand.*

WOMAN

Good evening, friends. Are you laughing at me or not? What are you standing here for, at the canal? Were you waiting for me?

HENRY

She asks: Were we waiting for her? Well, Feklusha, answer. She is a very nice lady.

FEKLUSHA

What shall I answer? You are so strange, Henry! Let's take a cab, and that's all. What's the use of answering?

HENRY

*Rejoicing:*

That's it! There's a brave fellow!

*Both laugh. The woman, after thinking awhile, also laughs.*

WOMAN

Are you drunk? Why do you stand near the canal? I am chilled, I am going home. What time is it?

FEKLUSHA

Happy people don't watch the time. Henry, what did I say? Happy people don't watch the time!

*Laughs loudly; Henry also laughs, clapping him on the shoulder.*

WOMAN

If you are so happy, take me along with you. I am also happy. My friends have nicknamed me "Happy Jenny." I bring luck with me wherever I go. They all praise me. Come, why are we standing here? The bird on my hat is afraid of the rain!

FEKLUSHA

*Laughing:*

Happy people don't watch the time? What? And what were you thinking of, Jennie?

HENRY

*Approvingly:*

Yes, yes, Feklusha, you have let loose. But we must ask the beautiful lady about her price.

WOMAN

What's the sense of that? You are talking nonsense. Let us go, and that's all.

HENRY

Feklusha! It was Henry Tile who asked what is your price. He was afraid the price would be too high.

WOMAN

Oh, not at all.

HENRY

*Laughing:*

Yes, he was afraid! But we are not afraid and we ask you to come along, Happy Jennie. Now we are all happy.

FEKLUSHA

All! I like her. You take her. Jennie, do you like cognac?

HENRY

Of course, she is coming along with us, of course. And there will be cognac, and hot punch. Come!

WOMAN

But where are you taking me? I am afraid to go to a strange place.

FEKLUSHA

We are kind people, Jennie—don't be afraid. Henry, shall I take her arm? Jennie, your arm! Oh, what a little hand!

HENRY

But you are a real Don Juan! Come. And I will be your protector. Go, my dear children, I will follow.

*They go. Henry follows them.*

WOMAN

Where are we going?

FEKLUSHA

Do you love me, Jennie? I am a kind man.

*The bank is deserted. Fog. Night.*

*Curtain.*

SCENE II: *The same night. When the curtain goes up after a brief intermission, the audience sees the same unfinished room in Henry's apartment. The room is brightly lighted. On the table are cognac and fruit.*

HENRY, FEKLUSHA *and* "HAPPY JENNIE" *are seated at the table, drinking. They have already drunk a great deal. The table is in disorder.* FEKLUSHA, *intoxicated, is without a coat, in a soiled shirt and torn vest. The woman's waist is partly unfastened, but she still wears her large hat with the wet plumes.*

HENRY

Have another glass, Jennie. Please. And eat this pear.

WOMAN

*Merci*, I feel embarrassed. You are the host but you are not drinking anything yourself!

HENRY

Oh, no. I am drinking, too. Please—Your health, "Happy Jennie!"

FEKLUSHA

I drink your health, too!

WOMAN

I'll be drunk. Well, here's to the health of the one who loves!

*They drink.*

WOMAN

I'd like to have some lemon. How much do you pay for your apartment?

HENRY

Twelve hundred.

WOMAN

Including the porter?

HENRY

Oh, yes. Including the porter.

WOMAN

That isn't expensive. And a nice neighborhood, too. Well—

*To Feklusha:*

What is it? Why do you pull me?

FEKLUSHA

Jennie, take off your hat!

HENRY

Feklusha, you are impolite to the lady, you should be attentive to her, instead of pulling her. Fie!

FEKLUSHA

Let her take her hat off! Tell her. Jennie, take your hat off!

WOMAN

What do you want of my hat? Let it dry. It'll dry better on my head. You're not going to buy me another one, anyway.

HENRY

And don't pull her hair!

WOMAN

It didn't hurt. We are having such a serious conversation here, and he bothers me. That isn't expensive, twelve hundred—not expensive at all. But you should let some of the rooms. What's the use of keeping them vacant? They're empty. Ah, you have filled my glass again, how quick you are!

HENRY

Your health!

WOMAN

My health is all right. Now, really, the rooms are empty. And good rooms, too. Anybody

would take them—so many people need rooms, and here they are idle. Put out a green sign in front of the house: "Two rooms to let."

HENRY

And with windows on the sunny side—that is very important.

WOMAN

With windows facing the sun, why not? Write it out and paste it downstairs, or the porter will do it. You wouldn't have to bother. Do you keep a cook, or do you have your meals at a restaurant?

HENRY

At a restaurant. You know, there is so much trouble when you have a cook.

WOMAN

Oh, yes, sometimes you get a cook who will give you a lot of trouble! But, oh, you men, how little you know how to live! It's funny to look at you!

HENRY

Another drink!

WOMAN

*Merci.* Don't you think it's too much? I'd like some lemon.

*To Feklusha:*

Again? How annoying you are—what is it you want?

FEKLUSHA

You came up with me, not with him. Tell her, Henry!

*Henry and the woman laugh.*

WOMAN

Of course with you, with you. Well, give me your lips. I'll kiss you—don't be angry.

FEKLUSHA

I don't want to be. You must love me, do you hear?

HENRY

He is jealous. Feklusha, are you jealous?

WOMAN

Jealous into the bargain, just think of it. Oh, you fussy little goat!

HENRY

He is a very jealous rabbit!

WOMAN

Oh, you foolish Feklusha! Look, even your friend is laughing at you, he is thinking, how foolish you

are, and your beard is like that of a goat. Oh, you little goat!

*Strokes Feklusha by the beard; he laughs happily.*

FEKLUSHA

Let go! Jennie!

WOMAN

No, I won't. Are you going to be jealous? Are you going to be jealous? You little rabbit. I was jesting a little. Now I can have another drink. Have a drink, Feklusha!

HENRY

She loves you.

WOMAN

Of course, I love him, he is so funny. Well, you gaping fool, why do you spill the drink on the tablecloth? You're spilling it on the cloth, and it'll have to be washed. Be careful.

*To Henry:*

We've spilled so much, excuse us!

HENRY

Never mind, that doesn't matter. Have this pear, please. Why don't you have some fruit? Feklusha, have some.

FEKLUSHA

I am eating. He is very kindhearted, Jennie. He is very kindhearted, isn't he?

WOMAN

He is the host, but he doesn't touch anything himself.

HENRY

Oh, no!

FEKLUSHA

I love you very much, Henry. I love him very much, Jennie—he is kindhearted. I know him well. He calls me "Alexandrov"—and I come rushing to him. You can't get away from him—Oh, no!

WOMAN

Oh, I am tired sitting up this way. May I sit on the couch? It's softer there.

FEKLUSHA

I'll sit down, too.

HENRY

Of course, please. Alexandrov, why don't you help the lady?

WOMAN

*Laughing, intoxicated:*

Or I am going to wash the dishes right away. I

am so foolish. Others do all sorts of things, but when I have had too much to drink, I start washing plates, cleaning knives and forks! It's very funny! I wash a little, but I smash a heap of dishes.

HENRY

If that will give you pleasure——

WOMAN

Oh, no. I am not drunk yet. Ah, that's good.

*Sits down on the couch.*

And you, little rabbit, sit down, and I am going to tell you a little story. Once upon a time there was a little rabbit—his ears were long—Oh, so long!

*She tickles Feklusha's hand, he laughs and withdraws his hand. Henry looks at them from the distance. He is silent, as though not there at all.*

FEKLUSHA

Do you love me, Jennie?

WOMAN

I love you, I love you, of course I love you! Once upon a time there was a little rabbit.

FEKLUSHA

Do you feel chilly?

WOMAN

I feel warm now—I was chilly before. Wait, I'll take my hat off. I'm tired of it—to the devil with it! Look at the plumes! My dear, I had been pacing the sidewalks ever since five o'clock—that's enough to chill anybody.

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

And I have five children!

WOMAN

*Laughing:*

Oh, you rabbit! What do you want so many children for? I had one, and lost it—and you have five! Girls?

FEKLUSHA

Three girls, and one little boy died—Sasha. How many is that altogether?

WOMAN

Well, of course, girls. Just think of it! I had a little boy, a little rascal.

FEKLUSHA

Now, let us count!

WOMAN

What's the use of counting? You are a queer fellow. What an accountant you are—counting his children on his fingers! Stop it!

FEKLUSHA

You're wrong, Jennie. It's always best to count, or you may forget. Wait, I'll ask him. Henry, how many children have I, eh?

*Henry maintains silence, his eyes closed.*

WOMAN

I guess he is dozing, be quiet! Let him sleep a little.

FEKLUSHA

Aren't you afraid of him?

WOMAN

Why should I be afraid of him? You are impolite to me, but he is very polite. I like him very much. Be quiet, let him sleep.

FEKLUSHA

He knows how to count! He has a million!

WOMAN

Really?

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

I am doing it purposely. I am sly, too. He thought I was away, but I—he is wise, but at the same time he's a fool, a big fool.

WOMAN

He is wiser than you. Are you wise? Let me see.

FEKLUSHA

I fooled him.

*Laughs.*

He thought I was away, but I was standing beneath his window every night. I watched all his tracks. He can't run away from me—Oh, no!

WOMAN

Don't shout!

FEKLUSHA

I am not shouting. "Alexandrov!" You'll find out the kind of man Alexandrov is! I'll make you wince! I can cry, and I can dance, if I want to—that's the kind of man I am. And if I want to, I can kill myself, and then, go and look for Alexandrov! "Alexandrov!"

WOMAN

You are just talking downright nonsense.

FEKLUSHA

It isn't nonsense. You have no right to say that to me. I'll hit you on the jaw.

WOMAN

What an angry rabbit you are!

FEKLUSHA

No, I am not a rabbit. I am a man. It was he who made me a rabbit, but I am a man. I have no ability, but I am a man. I have a heart beating here, I believe in God, but he doesn't. What right has he?

*Crying:*

I can't bear it any more!

WOMAN

Now, now! What is it you can't bear?

FEKLUSHA

*Weeping:*

I can't bear it any more!

WOMAN

Stop it, I am sick of it. Or I'll fall asleep, do you hear?

FEKLUSHA

Kiss me

WOMAN

First he cries, then he wants me to kiss him. There!

FEKLUSHA

I don't want you to kiss me. Your nose is crooked. Why did you come here with a crooked nose? Get out!

WOMAN

Get out yourself! Just think of him! You didn't invite me here. Get out yourself! You nasty little rabbit!

FEKLUSHA

Jennie!

HENRY

*Loudly:*

Alexandrov! Do you want some more cognac? Now, now—no fighting. Don't raise your hand!

FEKLUSHA

I am not fighting. It is she.

HENRY

You had a little quarrel? That's nothing. That'll pass. Have some cognac, Happy Jennie.

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

Her nose is crooked, Henry. The devil brought her to us!

WOMAN

And who brought you?

*Puts on her hat angrily.*

HENRY

Oh, aren't you ashamed, Alexandrov? You are offending our guest! That isn't right. What sort of a man are you?

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

The devil brought her here.

HENRY

Then you should be grateful to him, and not angry. If the devil had brought me such a woman, I would have said to him, Thank you! And I would have clasped his hairy, honest hand!

*Laughs.*

Oh, yes, that would be an honest hand! Or do you think that the devil cannot have an honest hand? What do you think, Jennie?

WOMAN

There are all kinds of devils, just as there are all kinds of people.

HENRY

*Solemnly:*

Do you hear, Alexandrov, you fool? Drink, liven up your dull brain! Drink, Jennie, drink some more—drink faster! Soon the cock will crow. My night is passing, and I haven't had a single one of my dreams. Drink faster. Swallow the fire! Here I, Henry Tile, am swallowing fire! Look! One, two, three!

*Drinks a large glass of cognac.*

FEKLUSHA

I too! Look, Henry! I too!

*Empties his glass, coughs; the woman, laughing, taps him on the shoulder.*

WOMAN

So will I!

HENRY

He too! All of us! Drink faster, I beg you, my dear guests, I beg you: drink faster! The night is passing rapidly, but we must be faster than the

night. Let us rush like wild horses. Do you know how to neigh like a horse, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

I do. What time is it? I must go to work to-morrow.

HENRY

What work? You are out of your mind. What work are you talking about? Have you forgotten, my old friend, have you forgotten that you are working for me?

FEKLUSHA

I am done for!

*Drinks.*

Jennie, drink!

WOMAN

I'm drinking.

*Laughs.*

You're driving us fast.

*They drink, loudly clanking their glasses.*

HENRY

Jennie, kiss Feklusha. Feklusha, kiss Jennie.

WOMAN

Drinking and kissing!

HENRY

Quick. I want to see how a man kisses the woman he loves. Just think of it, I have never seen it. Well?

FEKLUSHA

Well?

WOMAN

*Laughing.*

There!

*They kiss.*

HENRY

More—more—more passionately! Ah! That's the way!

WOMAN

*Laughing:*

What a queer fellow—he's never seen it before. Now, my little rabbit, we are like husband and wife—we kissed each other three times.

FEKLUSHA

I love you.

HENRY

Good! Oh, I know something else. We are all going to laugh soon. Wait. I'll be back in a minute—just a minute!

*Goes to his bedroom quickly.*

WOMAN

I am drunk, my dear little rabbit—the whole room is dancing before my eyes.

*Laughs.*

What is he up to now—the flatterer?

FEKLUSHA

Kiss me some more. Everything seems to be dancing. It's so funny!

WOMAN

That'll do. Let me rather stroke your head now. What thin hair the little rabbit has—the crows seem to have pulled them out. Have the crows pulled out your hair, little rabbit?

FEKLUSHA

The crows.

*Henry Tile enters, with changed make-up, and changed walk. He has on a light wig, bald-headed, and red beard. His cheeks are very red. He stops and looks silently at the frightened woman and at Feklusha.*

WOMAN

Who is that? Listen!

FEKLUSHA

Look here, there's nobody here! Who's that? Why are you staring at us like that?

*Calls, frightened:*

Henry, somebody is here!

*Henry laughs triumphantly.*

HENRY

*Distorting his words:*

Permit me to ask you: Is Henry Tile at home or has he fled already? I am an Englishman—Sir Edward Thomson. I am red-headed.

FEKLUSHA

Is it possible? Henry! By God, I have sobered up! I was wondering who it was—I was scared to death. Is it possible?

*Laughs. Henry and the woman also laugh.*

HENRY

You didn't recognize me?

FEKLUSHA

How could I? And your figure, even the figure—and that red beard!

*Laughs.*

WOMAN

And baldheaded. But why baldheaded?

HENRY

Look!

*He walks across the room with a changed gait, imitating an Englishman.*

FEKLUSHA

Wonderful, quite a different man. I don't understand a thing! I am out of my mind. Is that you, Henry?

HENRY

I. I can change my walk, I can change my voice, and everything else. Every night I put on this costume, I look at myself in the mirror, and I walk up and down this room alone. I am practicing. Do you understand me now, you fool?

FEKLUSHA

That's what I call wonderful. That's really wonderful. Jennie, do you see? It isn't enough to kiss his hand—that's what I say.

HENRY

*Changing his voice:*

Don't you want some music, Mr. Alexandrov, and you, my beautiful lady? I am a musician, and at your service.

FEKLUSHA

I do, please, let us have it. Jennie, music!

HENRY

I am a famous musician. Listen, Feklusha, I will play for you "The Waltz of the Dogs." Listen!

*He sits down with his usual affected manner, emphasizing it, and plays "The Waltz of the Dogs," explaining as he plays:*

Little dogs are dancing. Nice little dogs. Ti—ta—ta!

FEKLUSHA

Little dogs—well, well!

HENRY

This way. This way. They pull them by a string—they hold out bits of sugar—ta-ta-ti-ti-. And then the little dogs lift their feet—this way—this way—and they dance—the foolish little dogs. This way, this way!

FEKLUSHA

More! Please, play it again!

WOMAN

More! More!

HENRY

No. That's enough.

*He walks away from the piano quickly; he stares at the woman furiously, and then at Feklusha, and he stamps his foot.*

Who am I? Oh you fools! The best musicians in the world will play for me, and I will step with my foot—I will crush their stupid violin with my foot, and will say "Enough!" I will stand with my feet upon your stupid music! Enough! The most beautiful of women will fall at my feet and kiss the mud of my soles, and I will stand with my foot upon her beautiful naked breast and say, Enough! And she will be crushed while still kissing with dying lips. Enough! I will cry! Enough, you foolish, trivial, unworthy—creature!

*He bangs the piano with great force.*

WOMAN

Oh, don't! Better play some more.

FEKLUSHA

Don't, Henry. I am afraid! You'd better play —about the little dogs. Let the little dogs dance again.

HENRY

The little dogs?

FEKLUSHA

Yes.

*Laughs happily.*

How they pull them by the string, and they lift their little feet, their little feet!

*Raises his feet.*

HENRY

Their little feet?

FEKLUSHA

Yes. Please. I like it.

HENRY

Yes, yes.

*Laughs.*

He likes it, he likes it. Very well, then, the little dogs.

WOMAN AND FEKLUSHA

*Begging:*

The little dogs? . . .

HENRY

*Sitting down at the piano; with changed voice.*

Listen! I am a famous musician, and here I am playing for you the famous "Waltz of the Dogs." Dance.

*He plays* "The Waltz of the Dogs." *Feklusha, raising his hands, and imitating a dog dancing, turns around easily on his toes. His face is serious and solemn. The woman joins him. Raising her hands, she also dances turning around easily, as in a dream. Her face, too, is serious and attentive.*

*Turning around his red head and red cheeks, showing his white teeth, Henry looks back at them, laughing and playing.*

*Curtain*

# ACT IV

*The same scene. Night.* ELIZABETH, CARL *and* FEKLUSHA *are in the room.*

ELIZABETH

I should like to see the other rooms. Would it be right? I don't know.

CARL

Why not? Look around, if it gives you pleasure. You needn't pay any attention to Feklusha. We are friends now. But how fat I am getting, Liza—have you noticed it?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

CARL

It's almost indecent. I gained another pound last week, in spite of my exercise and horseback riding. I'll have to get a masseur. Mr. Feklusha, what do you do in order to be so thin? You will soon look like an Indian fakir.

FEKLUSHA

What? Yes. I have grown very thin.

CARL

How much do you weigh?

FEKLUSHA

What? I don't know, I have never weighed myself.

CARL

Liza, don't you think our friend Feklusha looks like a lunatic who has escaped from an asylum? But why don't you look at the other rooms, Liza? Go. We will chat here. What are you looking at?

ELIZABETH

Carl, is it possible that eighteen months have passed since we were here? Look—the same music.

CARL

Yes, Henry is conservative. I suppose eighteen months have passed—I don't know. But Liza, I don't understand the charms of these heartrending recollections. In this respect I am a European. The Russians don't live, they only remember something—and whatever they say or whatever they write, is always like a recollection.

ELIZABETH

And Henry?

CARL

Henry? I must say that I hardly know my brother Henry. Still, I am convinced that if he came in now, he would drive both of us out—notwithstanding the charms of your recollections. Make haste, my dear.

FEKLUSHA

He won't be here so soon. I know his habits.

CARL

So much the better. I wouldn't like to quarrel with Henry.

ELIZABETH

My husband is dead, and my child is dead, but here nothing has changed. There will be the head of Beethoven—when is it going to be there? Carl, I am going into the other rooms. I'll be back soon.

CARL

Go. The switch is near the door, you'll find it easily. Mr. Feklusha, sit down near me.

*Exit Elizabeth. Feklusha sits down near Carl.*

CARL

Well, Mr. Feklusha? Why do you smell of sour beer? 'You always think up something new.' You

look either sick or drunk. Why do you stare at me this way? Well?

FEKLUSHA

It's done.

CARL

What's done?

FEKLUSHA

He's insured. For a hundred thousand—as agreed.

CARL

*Rising.*

Really? Where is the policy? Has he the policy?

FEKLUSHA

The policy will soon be here. They promised to have it in a few days. I am telling you the truth.

CARL

Yes?

*Walks.*

CARL

No! No. You are lying, Mr. Feklusha, you are lying, I can see it! You are a perfectly unbearable fool—why do you lie to me? A queer man who doesn't understand his own advantage —and lies into the bargain. Or are you sorry to

lose the cognac you are drinking with Henry? But you have already drunk yourself sick—you need a hospital now—your eyes are like those of a mad dog. We, the Tiles, we can drink much. We come of strong stock, but I wouldn't advise you to drink much more!

FEKLUSHA

I haven't touched a drink in a month now. Enough!

CARL

That sounds pretty strong for Feklusha, but if that's the case, why are your eyes so half-witted? And what is it you like so much about Henry? He treats you like a scamp. Or is it that you are sorry for him, that you have human feelings?

FEKLUSHA

Yes, I am sorry for him. Why shouldn't I feel sorry for him?

CARL

Fie! Drop it! It's disgusting to hear you talk! Besides, I'll tell you frankly—I know something about medicine, and I tell you that in a year from now no insurance company will take a risk on Henry. There are certain symptoms, you understand, which I don't like at all—I am afraid for him.

FEKLUSHA

In a week—or two—the policy will be here.

CARL

Do you want me to believe that?

FEKLUSHA

It will be here.

CARL

I want you to know that I am not particularly interested. I live quite well now, and soon—meanwhile it is a secret—I am going to marry Elizabeth. And do you know how much money she has? Well. I suppose you haven't prepared that note either—it's impossible to have any dealings with you.

FEKLUSHA

I have prepared it. Here it is.

CARL

*Reading:*

"I ask that no one be blamed for my death. I leave no will. Give my servant Ivan five hundred rubles. Henry Tile." So. Was that your idea—the five hundred for Ivan?

FEKLUSHA

Yes.

CARL

You are a wonderful criminal, Feklusha. I take back everything unpleasant I have ever said to you. I know Henry's handwriting. This is a masterpiece. Most remarkable! Is that his paper, too?

FEKLUSHA

Yes, from his desk. Give it back to me.

CARL

How old are you—forty? I must tell you that you have been forty years a blockhead! To bury such a talent in the ground! It's inexcusably stupid! With such a genius for forging handwritings you could have made a fortune long ago. It's stupid!

FEKLUSHA

Let me have the note.

CARL

*Putting the note away in his pocketbook.*

Oh, no, you don't get that! Show me the policy, then you'll get your masterpiece—then it will be in safe hands. *Comprenez,* Mr. Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA

*Hesitating:*

Very well. You are a great criminal yourself, Carl.

CARL

*Indifferently:*

So-so. I must live somehow—money does not lie in the streets. Give me a million, then you may demand honesty of me. But to ride in a cab, while others are driving about in automobiles—thank you. But there is one thing of which you must beware—that's greed! That's what kills people like us. Here is Liza. Well, how is it, Lizette, have you shed tears there?

ELIZABETH

Carl, it is terrible.

CARL

What is it, Lizette? Ghosts?

ELIZABETH

Don't laugh. One of the rooms is only partly covered with wall paper. Dust, lime, spiderwebs—what room is that? I forget what he told me that time—what is that terrible room?

CARL

I don't know. Henry has so many absurd fantastic ideas. I think it's the nursery.

*Laughs.*

For your unborn children, Lizette!

FEKLUSHA

Yes, the nursery. In his excitement at that time, Henry ordered them not to touch the room—I suppose it has been neglected since then.

ELIZABETH

Go out, Carl, and ask Alexandrov to go out with you for awhile. I want to stay here alone. Do you mind?

CARL

Not at all. Let us go out, Feklusha, and chat. You are fascinating like a bride this evening—I am really fond of you. Call us, Liza.

*They go out. Elizabeth remains alone, holding an embroidered handkerchief. She wears large diamond earrings.*

ELIZABETH

How strange! Three years have passed. My husband and my child are dead and buried, and here everything is the same as it was—and the

apartment is waiting for me. Who am I? Liza. I have come purposely from Moscow. I came here before—I came to Henry. He was not at home, and I waited. Then I could come in and wait. Henry, I am waiting for you!

*Pause.*

Henry, I am waiting for you.

*Pause; Elizabeth weeps.*

I love you, Henry! I am happy to kiss the table at which you sit; to kiss the floor on which you walk, to kiss the room in which I did not want to live. I? I don't know. Who else if not I? I love you, Henry. I swear by the Almighty God, I love you, Henry, and I never loved anyone but you, and I never called anyone but you! You are strong, and you do not forgive. You drove me out when I knocked at your door. Go, you said. Go, unworthy Elizabeth—you said, and shut the door. And I went away. I love you, Henry.

*Weeps.*

Why are you so sad, if you do not love me, Henry? Yesterday you were walking along the bank of the canal, you thought you were alone, but I was riding in a carriage and looking at you from the window. You were so sad! And I fell in love

with you all over again, like a little girl—you thought you were alone—you walked sadly and saw no one. Perhaps you were even crying, Henry? Perhaps you were also thinking of the unborn children? Oh, what terrible words—unborn children! Who were not born? Who did not see the light? Who were expected here and who failed to come? Who were not born? Who failed to come? Henry! Henry!

*Pause.*

God, make it so that my soul shall remain here, that it shall turn into the air that would embrace him! He will come home sad—and suddenly he will feel a certain warmth, he will smile and say: "Why is it so nice in this room? How nice! Who is kissing me? Is that you, Liza? Is that you, Liza?"

*Weeps.*

Your mother, who died long ago and cannot curse me, because she died long ago—she taught you to play; you were then a little boy and she moved your little fingers—you had such tiny fingers then. Afterward, you played for me—I was sitting here, and you were playing, and you wanted me to laugh, but I suddenly felt sad and terrified. I sud-

denly commenced to hate you and your apartment. I commenced to hate your mother—I felt sad and terrified! I did not understand anything at the time, and I went to Moscow. But now I know. You were playing about the unborn children—your laughter was sad. Henry, why did you play for me? Who were not born? Who did not see the light? For whom were they waiting here—waiting—waiting—and who failed to come? Henry!

*Weeps.*

I love you, Henry!

*Weeps. Kneels and lowers her head on the keys of the piano. Then rises, adjusts her hair and wipes her forehead as though driving something away. Calls:*

Carl!

*Enter* FEKLUSHA *and* CARL.

CARL

Well, shall we go home? It's time. The devil knows what it is, Liza. I have just been boasting to Feklusha about my health—and suddenly I feel a most annoying palpitation of the heart! Do you think it's heart trouble?

ELIZABETH

I don't think so. Let's go. Good night, Alexandrov.

CARL

I don't think it's heart trouble, but it's dreadfully disagreeable. Well, to the devil with everything, I must start my massage treatment to-morrow! Good-by, Feklusha, and please don't disturb me the next few days. I am going to rest—come in to see me in about a week. Or rather I will write you when to come.

ELIZABETH

Come, let us go, Carl!

CARL

Wait a minute. I have waited for two hours at a time for you, so you may wait for me a minute. Remember, Alexandrov, I will write you when to come. But see that everything is ready, understand? It is high time for you to stop being such a fool—you have children. Well, let us go. I hope we won't meet Henry now. The devil take your fancies, Liza! . . .

*They go out.*

FEKLUSHA

*Says to Carl in the corridor:*

The door shuts itself.

CARL'S *Voice*

I know. Good-by.

FEKLUSHA

Good-by.

*Feklusha remains alone. He sits down at the table, takes out of his pocket an envelope and a carefully folded sheet of paper; reads:*

"I ask that no one be blamed for my death. I leave no will. Give my servant Ivan five hundred rubles. Henry Tile." So. Very well. He thinks that I prepared one note, but I made two—the fool Karlusha. He is greedy, but foolish. And he didn't see that his note didn't have the date, while no one would write a note like that without dating it—foolish Carl! And the *r* in the other note is different from Henry's *r*—he didn't notice that either in his greed. Such fools get caught.

*Goes over to the mirror, takes out a comb, combs his hair.*

They're coming out! I suppose it's consumption—I feel cold and I perspire—but I'll show you my consumption!

*He walks up and down the room, examining things with contempt.*

I'll show you!

*He tries to open the locked drawer in the table, looks over papers, and pushes them aside with contempt..*

Order! Scoundrels! I'll show you order!

*Sits down at the table and shakes his hands.*

It would be fine to put a bomb under the Nicholas Bridge and blow it to pieces—so that all would fly to hell. Yes. And I could put a bomb under the whole city, a bomb of tens of thousands of pounds—then I would also be blown to the devil. No, why should I? A wire could be stretched as far as Shuvalovo and a button placed somewhere on a tree, in the woods—I could press it once—and they would all be blown to hell! I think I'll wind up in a lunatic asylum—I was turning round and round, and now I can't disentangle myself. Oh, fiddlesticks!

*Thoughtfully:*

They'll beat me there. They say they beat people there—they break their ribs—that's unpleasant. And the food, they say, is poor there—the lunatics don't understand, but as soon as one of them complains, they break his ribs. They say to him, don't lie! The lunatic has no rights whatever, that is very unjust. Of course a lunatic may be quiet, then no one will touch him. The wardens

like the quiet lunatics. I suppose they also suffer a great deal. Oh, yes! Of course—quietly.

*Rises and walks ever faster.*

It's easy for you to say, quietly. Yes. It's easy for you to say it, but for me, it's dreadful—very dreadful.

*He turns around the room senselessly; muttering indistinctly, without noticing that Henry Tile has entered.*

HENRY

Good evening, Feklusha.

FEKLUSHA

What? What?

HENRY

I say: good evening. Why are you running round like that?

FEKLUSHA

I? Nothing. Good evening, Henry.

HENRY

You were muttering. Are you ill?

FEKLUSHA

*Laughs.*

Was I? There was no one to talk to, so I was talking to myself. I have found myself a comrade just as wise as I am.

HENRY

What were you talking about?

FEKLUSHA

My nonsense is of no interest to anybody. I was just talking about domestic affairs. Is it raining?

HENRY

Yes, it's raining.

*Sits down, fatigued.*

FEKLUSHA

Henry, Ivan has gone out. He said you sent him away for the evening.

HENRY

Yes, I sent him away. Sit down, please, and keep quiet.

*Silence.*

FEKLUSHA

What is it, Henry? Why do you look so pale—are you ill? Perhaps you ought to see the doctor.

HENRY

No. I am well. I suppose I am tired—I had to talk a great deal at the conference to-day—I had to discuss business. I argued with the fools and I am tired. Are you going to stay long to-night?

FEKLUSHA

No. Just a minute. I am going soon.

*Pause.*

HENRY

What a pity I have no fireplace. I thought of everything, but forgot about a fireplace. It's true, we have steam heat. Well?

FEKLUSHA

Henry! There has been a change in your plans. Even if you swear to me!

HENRY

Yes? Wait. What's this odor of perfume? Yes, I can smell it. Have you commenced to use perfume?

FEKLUSHA

You are inventing now! I can't smell any perfume here.

HENRY

Yes, there is. But that isn't important. What did you want to say to me? Tell me.

FEKLUSHA

I have told you. There has been a change in your plans. Tell me the truth, Henry, I will kneel before you. I haven't been in church in five years,

but I will go to church now and pray for you. Tell me the truth!

HENRY

You are fond of kneeling. What truth? I am tired to-night.

FEKLUSHA

Why, my dear fellow! We have been friends—remember, when we were small, when we were at school together. Tell me! Spare my life, I can't endure it any longer!

*Weeps.*

HENRY

You are also crying? Strange. For some reason I see so many tears to-day. I was at the station this afternoon.

FEKLUSHA

*Sighing, wiping his eyes with a soiled handkerchief,*

What were you doing at the station?

HENRY

I was watching the trains. No, I was sending off a letter. And there I saw an old woman in a shawl, walking on the platform—she was alone—and she was crying. Strange!

*Thoughtfully.*

FEKLUSHA

People rarely cry in the street. Only when they are drunk or when they go to a relative's funeral. Henry, listen to me—or I am going to cry again!

HENRY

Really? Don't. No, there is no change in my plan. And beginning to-morrow you will have rest—I am leaving to-morrow.

FEKLUSHA

*Reddening:*

To-morrow? By what route?

HENRY

Tss! It is hard for me at this moment to talk to you, my old comrade, but come in to-morrow and you will know everything.

*Smiling:*

But don't try to run after me—you'll not overtake me!

FEKLUSHA

Why do you say that?

HENRY

Yes, yes, you are a sly little beast!

FEKLUSHA

A fool is not helped even by his slyness—he will only fool himself. Shall I come in early—before going to the office?

HENRY

You may come in early. Now go home and sleep peacefully, Feklusha, my old comrade. Are your children well?

FEKLUSHA

I suppose they are well. Why have you stopped drinking cognac? Henry, your face seems to have grown darker.

HENRY

I don't feel like drinking. Go.

FEKLUSHA

To-day is just a month since we had our last drink of cognac. Remember? Well, I am going, I won't disturb you.

*Quietly*:

Have you put the money away in a safe place?

HENRY

Ssh! Keep quiet. Good night, Feklusha, go. Have you rubbers on? It's raining hard. Good-by, till to-morrow.

FEKLUSHA

If it's till to-morrow, it's not good-by, but *au revoir. Au revoir,* Henry. Good night. And I tell you, you are doing well to leave this apartment! I never said anything before, but now I may tell you: Leave it as soon as you can! If one should stay here alone for one hour, he'd lose his mind, by God!

HENRY

Yes, I am leaving it. Good-by.

FEKLUSHA

Good night. May I say another word? I understand everybody and I can tell people by their faces. I can tell their inclinations, but here I am looking at you. You are very stern!

*Softly:*

And if I didn't know your thoughts——

HENRY

Ssh!

FEKLUSHA

*With sudden fury:*

Don't hiss to me! There are no strangers here! What do you mean? I can hiss, too.

*Pause.*

Excuse me, Henry!

*Goes.*

HENRY

The door shuts itself.

FEKLUSHA

I know, Henry.

*Goes. Henry looks after him, suddenly stops.*

HENRY

Wait. It's raining hard. Here's money for a cab. Take it.

FEKLUSHA

Thank you. Why so much? You embarrass me, really.

HENRY

Never mind. Go.

*Feklusha stops at the door, looks at his hand.*

FEKLUSHA

Henry! I am looking at my hand and I wonder. You gave me twenty-five rubles, but why am I not rejoicing? Of course, it isn't such a large sum, but if this happened before, I would have felt happy. And now, I feel—or does it seem so to

me after my tears?—I feel as if I ought to get more for my tears. Or is it figured out right?

*Without raising his eyes:*

Excuse me.

*Exit. Door is heard closing. Henry is alone. He looks at the watch.*

HENRY

It's eleven. I must take off my collar.

*He takes off his collar, his cuffs, his coat, and places them carefully on the armchair. He walks up and down the room heavily and slowly. He tries to wipe the window pane, behind which the rain is heard.*

Yes. It's eleven o'clock now, and the sun rises at about seven. How many more hours of darkness? Many—never mind the exact number, Henry! Henry Tile, say simply, many! Many hours, much darkness! I have never given any thought to what people do when they end their life, when they kill themselves, and now I feel very strange, I don't know what to do. Perhaps it is necessary to sit at the table, and I am walking? I must sit down.

*He sits down, but soon gets up and walks again.*

No, nonsense! Suicides don't think whether they

should walk or sit. I suppose they walk around. But where does this odor of perfume come from? Such sweet, strange, sad perfume. Women who are young and who want love, use such perfume. But their hearts are sad—sad perfume! Sad women, and Elizabeth—now I don't remember her, but there was a time when I loved her—there was something—there was sadness. My God! Why do I say My God? My God! I don't know anything, I don't remember anything, I don't love anybody! A murderer? A thief who has stolen a million? Henry Tile who loved accuracy? I don't know. There was everything—and there was nothing. Why did I strike the table with my fists, why did I cry? Why did Henry Tile write figures, columns of figures, an endless caravan in an endless desert? There was everything—and there was nothing. There was a strange man who tossed about, who shouted, who donned a red wig like a clown, who swallowed fire. And there was another strange man who worked in the bank, who dismissed clerks, who looked stern and who was known as Henry Tile. What nonsense—"Henry Tile!" And who will lie in a coffin—Henry Tile or the other one? And where shall I be? Here I have already thought about the coffin—white, with tassels. I am terrified. Is

it possible that all is ended? I am terrified. Has *this* really come? I have lived and lived—and suddenly this. *This!* How horrible! Horrible! *This!* No! No! I am not afraid. I am not afraid. Oh, beware of deception, beware of deception, beware of deception! And so, the coffin, white, with tassels, and some one is in it. Yes, of course. It is dreadful to Henry Tile with his figures, it is dreadful to that other one who wanted to steal, to kill some one, to violate, who put on the stupid red wig of a rogue. But where am I? My God, great wisdom and love, answer me: Where was I with my great, sad and lonely soul? I am no more. There is no one. There is nothing. There is only horror—and *this.*—*This.* Henry, Henry, my dear, be calm; you knew how to strike the table with your fist, now you must be calm. Yes. Good. Yes. I am cold. No, I am not cold, but it is cold here. Why did I take off my coat? I must put it on again. These are the kind of cuffs Henry Tile used to wear.

*Forgets to put on the coat.*

But this is unbearable. These empty rooms have such a terrible effect on me—as though there was a murderer there. A murderer is hiding in every room and waiting. It would be well to turn on the

lights there, but I am afraid to go in. But here I can do it. Oh, here I can do it.

*He turns on some more lights.*

Now it is light. But what a queer strange room. And there is absolutely no one here. I smell the odor of perfume again—who has perfume here? Have the murderers perfume here? May the devil take the one who invented it. I must go into the bedroom.

*Opens the drawer of the table, takes out a revolver and examines it in a businesslike manner, puts it on the table.*

I must shoot myself where I sleep. I must cover myself over my head with the quilt, as though I were going to sleep; then I won't notice it. Yes. I must do something else—what? I have forgotten everything. What? Oh, yes. I must write a note. Paper, ink, ink? No! I don't need any notes. That's nonsense. There was everything—and there was nothing, and *this*. *This*. I must go into the bedroom. What have I forgotten? My God, why do I say, My God? My God, what have I forgotten? What?

*He sits down at the piano.*

Now I will play "The Waltz of the Dogs." Listen, Henry Tile, I will play for you for the last

time my favorite "Waltz of the Dogs." My mother taught me to play it this way.

*He plays, at first loudly, then ever more softly. Towards the end, he breaks off a musical phrase, his head falls on the piano, and he sobs softly. Then he closes the piano silently and carefully, takes the revolver and goes to the bedroom. He stops, and says impatiently:*

What else? Oh, what else?

*He looks around the room perplexedly.*

I must—I must—what must I? I must shut off the light, yes, I must do it. It will burn all night. Let it burn.

*He goes into the bedroom. A moment of silence. He soon comes out of the bedroom, without a vest—he looks for something silently, as if he has either forgotten something, or could not find it. He is looking for something and not finding it, having stopped thinking of what he was looking for, he goes to the bedroom quickly.*

*The room is empty for a while. A dull shot is heard.*

*Curtain*